



*North Andover Parent's Advisory Council
For
Children with Special Needs*

MINUTES OF THE NAPAC GENERAL MEETING: October 5th, 2006

TOPIC: A "meet and greet" with Joyce Laundre, new Director Of Special Education in North Andover

Joyce Laundre shared her background in the field of education: She has worked in Child Welfare for the state of Massachusetts, as a substitute teacher, a paraprofessional, a classroom teacher and as both an assistant principal and principal.

NAMS:

Vision therapist position is currently open; consultant piece is being covered, however services are not. Compensatory services will be given, hopefully over the school year and during the summer if needed. If you are able to locate a private practitioner to service your child, the town will compensate for services this way also. If anyone knows of a potential candidate please call Joyce Laundre at 978-794-1717 or email her at laundrej@northandover.k12.ma.us

What is vision therapy? Children who have significant vision issues receive vision therapy. It is education based, not medical based. How do we have the child access the curriculum with vision issues is what is asked in determining need for vision therapist.

Currently, there is an open speech therapist position at the Middle School. Anne Goldstein is starting on Tuesday of next week and will service in the interim until one is found. There are 80-90 MS students being serviced, and Joyce wonders why there are so many-this number is very large for a middle school population.

Question from parent regarding current services at the MS for PDD? Joyce will check on programming and respond. **RESPONSE:** Joyce spoke with Joan McQuade, principal. Monique Hammond is the teacher assigned for students with PDD. Each student's program is individualized based on his/her needs. Joyce had just contracted with an autism specialist named Mary Channel who will consult not only with the special educators but also with the general education staff as well. This will be ongoing professional development as well as help with programming. There will be an all staff training presented by Mary Channel at the Middle School on December 8th.

Question from parent regarding the "Life Skills" program at the Middle School Parent was promised that a program/curriculum would be purchased by September 2006 and none was purchased. It was agreed at this parent's IEP meeting that this would be a formalized program. Joyce promised to check into it. **RESPONSE:** There is not one set "life skills" curriculum available. Many different types of curriculum are utilized by teachers for students identified for this programming, such as ed-mark, Touch math, etc. What is important is that the teacher and staff understand multiple entry points and access. The new teacher involved, Shannon Rowe, is doing a nice job settling in and learning the needs of the students. Joyce has asked teachers from other districts who have developed programs such as this to consult to the program. Again, each student requires individual programming so a one size fits all is not appropriate. Joyce has agreed to support with whatever curriculum materials the teacher needs, in conjunction with the building principal.

Elementary Schools:

Recent special education teacher resignation has been filled by Joanne Coburn.

Anita Aronson, PT Occupational Therapist at Franklin School has resigned. Joyce has contacted

Onward Healthcare, another OT agency similar to Karen Hefler's. Parent suggested that Joyce contact Casey Quirk, which she will do.

New Programs:

Joyce feels that N.A. needs Wilson Certified and Orton-Gillingham educators. She is sending some speech/language therapists and teachers to training. Orton-Gillingham is a reading program that emphasizes sound/symbol relationships. Wilson is an offshoot of this. Neither is a "one size fits all" program. Carroll and Landmark Schools use these, so let's get our teachers certified and perhaps we can reduce the number of children who are being outplaced for these services. Children should be educated in their own community.

All special education staff will be meeting in October, something that has not happened in N.A. for a very long time. This will happen on a regular basis in the future.

PDD Summit: With Marie Taras and Mary Lou McCarthy, examining needs and best practices for children on the autism spectrum. More training, and getting people in to train us.

Joyce is very dedicated to looking at the increase in the number of true mental health disorders in young children, including bipolar and other emotional disturbances. NAPS needs to figure out the best approach and the best program supports for these children. Joyce has spoken with Bob McArdle, Director at GLEC who is willing to help us to set up programs. Looking at a need for an alternative education program at the High School-needs to be done right. **UPDATE:** Susan Nicholson spoke to the school committee the evening of October 30th, 2006 regarding an initiative to start new emotion based programs at the high school, as well as the possibility of programming for children who have behavioral issues around the school day/setting that proposes a night school from 3-7, four nights per week. Kids can work during the day and attend school in the evening.

Other Discussions:

DOE is sending parent surveys out. They have all of the names and addresses of parents in North Andover, so be on the lookout for the very simply to complete survey.

Currently, North Andover is undergoing an Educational Quality Assurance (EQA) assessment. This is an audit of school districts to see if they are achieving and then to ask DOE why not, if they are not. Documents examined in October, and in November the EQA examiners will be onsite.

By 2104, as per the No Child Left Behind Act, proficiency targets need to be reached. ALL students need to be proficient. Team decision within an IEP whether a child takes the MCAS or does the portfolio assessment. Joyce is attending some alternative assessment/MCAS meetings and would be happy to meet again with the PAC to discuss.

Special Education Office, staffing update:

Mary Cay Richard is now the out of district coordinator. Joanne Morin is the secretary in the office and Jo Marie Allen will be working as a clerical/assistant for seventeen hours.

Summer Programs:

Lexington has a great summer program through the LABB collaborative; Melrose has enrichment summer programs for typical as well as special needs students during the summer. Parent request that a task force be developed to develop a summer program. Joyce agreed- and it will be comprised of Jenn Conway from the Youth Center, Mary Lou Connors, a parent, along with community services. More information will be forthcoming in PAC emails. Parents would have to pay fees for this service. Similar to programs available at the Professional Center, like 2 by 2.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, November 2 Extra-curricular Activities for children with special needs

PREPARED BY: Lisa Rau Staff, NAPAC Co-chair

(Please Note: every attempt was made to accurately transcribe the content of this meeting. These minutes are based on the Secretary's notes and are not specifically endorsed by the speakers at the

meetings.)

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